

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, the "Abstract of the Disclosure" and the "Title" were objected to in the initial Office Action for various minor reasons. Thus, these sections have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions.

Currently, claims 33-75 are pending in the present application, including independent claims 33, 47, 57, 62, and 69. In the Office Action, original dependent claims 10-14, 19-21, and 29-32 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include the limitations of all intervening claims. Thus, claim 10 has been rewritten into independent form as claim 62, and claim 11 has been rewritten into independent form as claim 69. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 62 and 69, and their respective dependent claims 63-68 and 70-75, are now in condition for allowance.

Furthermore, new independent claims 33, 47, and 57 incorporate, *inter alia*, the subject matter of original dependent claims 2 and 23 (now cancelled), which required that the nonwoven web contain meltblown fibers. In the initial Office Action, original dependent claims 2 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO 99/20822 to Watts, et al. Watts, et al. describes a hydraulically entangled composite material formed from a pulp layer and a nonwoven layer of substantially continuous filaments, such as a spunbonded web. (See e.g., p. 1). To the contrary, independent claims 33, 47, and 57 expressly require a nonwoven web containing at least 20% by weight meltblown fibers in the nonwoven web, which are not continuous

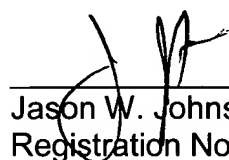
filaments. For example, the claimed nonwoven web may be a meltblown web, a coform web that contains meltblown fibers, and so forth. The immense differences between continuous filament nonwoven webs and those formed from meltblown fibers are well known to those skilled in the art. Thus, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 33, 47, and 57 patentably define over Watts, et al.

In summary, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Tentoni is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this response.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully requested,

DORITY & MANNING, P.A.



Jason W. Johnston
Registration No. 45,675

DORITY & MANNING, P.A.
P. O. Box 1449
Greenville, SC 29602-1449
Phone: (864) 271-1592
Facsimile: (864) 233-7342

Date: 4/20/04